

To the Chairman and Members of the Stowmarket Urban District Council.

1st FEBRUARY, 1901.

GENTLEMEN,—

I have the honour of presenting to you my FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT on the health of Stowmarket for the year ending 31st December, 1900.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Estimated
Population,
4,730.

I have estimated the population of Stowmarket to the middle of the year, 1900 at 4,730, and based the following statistics on that estimate.

Birth Rate,
21·9 per 1000.

During the year there were 104 births registered (52 males and 52 females), giving a Birth Rate of 21·9 per 1000. This is 2·7 per 1000 lower than the average Birth Rate for the previous 10 years. The Birth Rate for the whole of England for the year was 28·9 per 1000, and for the East Stow Rural District ~~Council~~ 22·5 per 1000.

Death Rate,
15 per 1000.

The number of Deaths registered during the year was 70 (30 males and 40 females), and this with one death which occurred in the Workhouse and belonged to the town, made a total of 71 for the year, giving a Death Rate of 15·0 per 1000. This is 2 per 1000 higher than last year. The average Death Rate for the previous 10 years was 14·8 per 1000. The Death Rate for the whole of England for 1900 was 18·3 per 1000. The Death Rate for East Stow in 1900 was 12·7 per 1000.

Infant Mortality,
153 per 1000
Births.

During the year 16 infants died before they reached the age of one year, giving an Infant Mortality of 153 per 1000 births. This is considerably higher than last year when it was 126, and compares unfavourably with the average of the previous four years (the only statistics I have) which was 125 per 1000 births. The Infant Mortality for the whole of England in 1900 was 154, and for the East Stow District 86 per 1000 births.

Zymotic Death
Rate,
1·4 per 1000.

The Deaths caused by the seven principal zymotic diseases amounted to 7 for the year, giving a Zymotic Death Rate of 1·4 per 1000, comparing unfavourably with last year, when it was only 0·6 per 1000. The Zymotic Death Rate for England in 1900 was 2·0 per 1000, and for East Stow 0·4.

Other Deaths.

Amongst the other deaths there were 4 from whooping cough, 8 from phthisis, and 2 from other tubercular diseases; there were 5 deaths from cancer, 12 from diseases of the respiratory organs, 6 from heart disease, and one death caused by an accident. Twenty-four of the total deaths were of people over 65 years of age.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There were 23 notifications of Infectious Diseases during the year compared with 48 last year and 28 the year before.

It was not necessary to open the Infectious Diseases Hospital during the year.

Hospital.

The buildings for the disinfecting chamber have not been commenced although the order for the apparatus was passed by the Council over a year ago. This delay, I am informed, is owing to the Local Government Board not having yet passed the plans.

Scarlet Fever. There were 10 cases of scarlet fever reported, compared with 32 last year : one of these ended fatally.

Typhoid Fever. There were 5 cases of typhoid fever reported, compared with 2 last year : one of these ended fatally.

Diphtheria. There were 2 cases of diphtheria reported, compared with 6 last year : there were no deaths.

Erysipelas. There were 6 cases of erysipelas reported, compared with 3 last year.

General Remarks. During the year I have analysed the water from 9 wells. In each case I found the water polluted, and therefore dangerous to health. By your orders 6 of these wells have been closed, one was cleaned out according to my instructions, and the remaining two are under discussion. Only one owner opposed the closing of his well, and in this case the Council took prompt action and called in the expert opinion of Dr. Thresh, Medical Officer of Health for the Essex County Council. In his evidence Dr. Thresh made one very significant remark—he said the water under discussion was so bad that although he had examined several thousand samples of drinking water he had never come across a worse one. The magistrates ordered the well to be closed., the owner to pay the Council's costs.

Gentlemen, I have on more than one occasion drawn your attention to the condition of the surface wells in our town ; they are all polluted, or liable at any time to become polluted, by sewage, and therefore are dangerous to the health not only of those who have to use or persist in using them, but also of those who recognise the danger and avoid using surface well water in any form. Every few months cases of typhoid are imported. You all know this disease is caused by a certain bacillus or germ which lives and multiplies in the intestines of the patient—and millions of these germs are passed in the excreta daily. These germs can live and multiply in sewage sodden soil and may easily find their way into surrounding surface wells. In wells similar to that condemned by Dr. Thresh, and to my knowledge there are many just as bad in Stowmarket, these germs can also live and multiply. Now, gentlemen, you know the condition of most of the sewers and practically of all the cesspools in this town. A large quantity of liquid sewage is passing every day from these sewers, etc., into the subsoil water ; and all the surface wells are supplied by this subsoil water. In dry weather some of the wells depend almost entirely on this leakage for their supply. In passing through the earth the sewage polluted water is acted on by certain bacteria, and the organic matter or sewage is converted into inorganic and harmless salts, but after this has been going on for years the earth gradually gets clogged with organic matter and this process stops altogether. The earth surrounding most of the wells in Stowmarket is now in this condition.

As I said before typhoid cases are constantly being imported, and from the above remarks you will clearly see each case is a menace to the town, and any day a wide spread epidemic of typhoid fever may arise and cause many deaths.

During the year the slaughter-houses and bake-houses were visited, and were found in a fairly satisfactory sanitary condition.

Table I. shows the estimated population and birth and death rates for the last 10 years.

Table III. shows the cases of infectious diseases notified and particulars as to age.

Table IV. shows the causes of, and ages at, death during the year.

In conclusion, I have again to acknowledge the help I have received from the Sanitary Inspector and to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for the considerate manner in which they have always received my suggestions.

I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

CHAS. W. LOW, M.B., D.P.H.,

Medical Officer of Health.

TABLE I.
FOR WHOLE DISTRICT.

YEAR.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.		DEATHS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE.		DEATHS AT ALL AGES. TOTAL.		DEATHS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.	Deaths of Non-residents register'd in District.	Deaths of residents register'd beyond District.	DEATHS AT ALL AGES NETT.	
		Number.	Rate.*	Number	Rate per 1,000 Births register'd	Number.	Rate.*				Number.	Rate.*
1890	4317	123	28.4								79	18.2
1891	4346	125	28.7								56	12.8
1892	4374	106	24.2								73	16.6
1893	4404	99	22.4								89	20.2
1894	4432	117	26.3								53	11.9
1895	4460	109	24.4								59	13.2
1896	4489	107	23.8	10	93						58	12.9
1897	4518	109	24.1	12	110						64	14.1
1898	4546	98	21.7	17	171					6	77	16.9
1899	4600	103	22.3	13	126					4	60	13.0
Averages for years 1890--1899.		109	24.6	13	125						66	14.8
1900	4730	104	21.9	16	153	70	14.7			1	71	15.0

* Rates calculated per 1,000 of estimated population.
Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water) 2177
Total population of all ages at Census of 1891 4341

TABLE III.
Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the Year 1900.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT.						
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.					
		Under 1.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 and upwards.
Diphtheria	2			1		1	
Erysipelas	6			1		4	1
Scarlet fever	10		2	6	2		
Enteric fever	5			1	2	2	
Totals	23		2	9	4	7	1

TABLE IV.
CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH DURING YEAR 1900.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	DEATHS IN WHOLE DISTRICT AT SUBJOINED AGES.						
	All Ages.	Under 1.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and upwards.
Scarlet fever	1				1		
Whooping-cough	4	1	3				
Enteric Fever	1					1	
Diarrhoea	1	1					
Enteritis	1						1
Phthisis	8			1	4	2	1
Other tubercular diseases	2				2		
Cancer, malignant disease	5					2	3
Bronchitis	6	1				1	4
Pneumonia	4		2			1	1
Other diseases of Respiratory organs	2	1					1
Alcoholism }	3	1				2	
Cirrhosis of Liver }							
Venereal diseases							
Premature birth	6	6					
Heart diseases	6					3	3
Accidents	1				1		
All other causes	19	4		1		4	10
All causes	70	15	5	2	8	16	24